



## Public meeting to address trapping

LARAMIE – Persons interested in trapping in Wyoming should plan to attend a public meeting to address minor edits to the Chapter 4 trapping regulation.

Wildlife managers with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will present information on Chapter 4 beginning at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 22 at the Game and Fish office at 528 S. Adams St. in Laramie.

Draft regulations are available on the WGFD website at <http://wgfd.wyo.gov/Get-Involved/Public-Meetings>. Written comments can be submitted at the above website or may be mailed to Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wildlife Division – Attention Regulations, 3030 Energy Lane, Casper, WY 82604. Deadline for written comments is 5 p.m. Monday, Sept. 26.



## Williams family named Landowner of Year

The Laramie Region is pleased to announce the Williams family of the ZN Ranch near Saratoga have been selected as the 2016 Landowner of the Year.

George and Susan Williams, and their son Chris and his wife Katie, manage the ZN's cow-calf operation, as partners in the Tetrad Corporation. Over the decades they have been ranching on the ZN, the Williams family has strived to enhance the landscape for the benefit of both cattle and wildlife. Their commitment to ensuring the land passes from one generation to the next, in better condition than when they took on its stewardship, is an underlying theme in their management decisions for the ZN Ranch.

The Williams family has been active in the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative and the development of the Platte Valley Habitat Partnership Plan. Chris Williams was one of the first landowners to work with WGFD to develop a plan for habitat improvements on the ranch.

Major changes in grazing rotations and timing of use helped to quickly improve riparian vegetation along Rattlesnake Creek, and a prescribed burn on Sheephead Mountain improved transition habitat for mule deer. Planning is underway to complete brush mowing, cheatgrass control and continued modifications to grazing plans to enhance habitat.

Wildlife and hunting are as much a passion for the Williams family as their ranching operation. They have participated in the AccessYes program for more than a decade, providing access for elk hunters. They continue to provide sustainable habitat for wildlife and their cattle operation. The Williams family exemplifies the level of land stewardship, and concern for wildlife and their habitat, which the WGFD is proud to recognize.



Tasha Bauman



Beth Bear

## Two Laramie Region employees recognized by department

The Laramie Region is celebrating two employees who were recently recognized by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Forensic Analyst Tasha Bauman was named the Services Division Employee of the Year and Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator Beth Bear was named the Fish Division's Employee of the Year. Both women were honored at the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting in Pinedale in July.

Bauman serves as the vice-president of the Society for Wildlife Forensic Science and will take over as president in 2019. She is one of a handful of wildlife forensic scientists chosen by National Institute of Standards and Technology, to serve on the new Organization of Scientific Area Committees federal task force for forensics. She is involved in Women in Science and is active a member of Zonta Inter-

national. She currently lives in Laramie with her husband Greg.

Bear has been the backbone of the Game and Fish Department's aquatic invasive species (AIS) program since its inception. AIS legislation was passed into law in 2010 and Bear was selected to fill the newly created AIS coordinator position. She was given only nine weeks to help implement and lead one of the largest programs in the agency's history.

Bear is the only permanent employee in a program that relies on 50 contract employees scattered throughout the state. In 2015, the AIS team completed more than 47,000 boat inspections in 223 days at more than 65 locations across the state. To date, Wyoming remains mussel free thanks to the AIS program.

Bear lives in Laramie with her husband Steve and their two sons.

## Public updated on Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative


Forty hunters and residents interested in the progress of the Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative (PVMDI) attended public meetings held throughout the Laramie Region in July.

Discussions included topics such as migration routes, population size, hunting season dates, number of limited quota licenses and future management decisions. The Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative is currently in its fifth year.

In the photo at right, Laramie Wildlife Management Coordinator Corey Class (center) and Saratoga Wildlife Biologist Will Schultz (far right) share information at the Laramie meeting. Meetings were also held in Cheyenne, Rawlins and Saratoga.

For more information on the PVMDI, visit the Game and Fish website at [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).






## Hunter Management Areas

Go to Wyoming Game & Fish Homepage

| HMA Name          |
|-------------------|
| Absaroka Front    |
| Bear River Divide |
| Beer Mug          |
| Belt Cite         |
| Big Piney         |
| Bolton Creek      |
| Broom Creek       |
| Carter Mountain   |
| Chimney Butte     |
| Como Bluffs       |
| Cook Road         |
| Copper Mountain   |
| Coyote Creek      |
| De Smet           |
| Deep Creek        |
| Deer Creek        |
| Diamond Lake      |
| Duncan Ranch      |
| Elk Mountain      |
| Fort Phil Kearny  |
| Greybull River    |
| Hanna Draw        |
| Hat Six           |
| Heart Mountain    |
| Heart Creek       |

**2016  
Hunter Management Program**



Hunter Management Areas (HMA) are parcels of land where the Wyoming Game & Fish Department facilitates management of hunters for access to hunt. The area may refer solely to private lands or a combination of private, state trust land and federal land within ranch boundaries. All hunters who wish to hunt these access areas must obtain a printed permission slip. The hunter pays no fee for receiving permission for access for the specific times only. Please see the individual HMA Ranch Rules for additional information on the specific species, Hunt Area(s), and number of permission slips available.

All hunting licenses are now electronic and are automatically added to the hunter profile approximately one hour after purchase. There is no need to manually add licenses to your profile. If a license does not show up properly, please check to be certain you are logging in by entering your information EXACTLY as it is printed on your license.

## Online HMA system goes live

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood is pleased to announce the Hunter Management Area (HMA) permission slip systems went live on July 11.

The system went live by 8 a.m. and an hour later 316 customers had created profiles and applied for 397 permission slips. Slightly fewer than 1,000 slips were issued by noon and approximately 1,400 slips were issued by 5 p.m.

These permission slip numbers are down slightly from last year. Nearly 7,000 permission slips were issued during the month of July, which is very similar to past years.



## Goodbye Jake

Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley has transferred to the Casper Region where he will serve as East Casper Game Warden.

Jake said work in Casper is going to be much different as the phone rings all the time compared to Medicine Bow. He will be replaced by Game Warden Jordan Winter.

The Laramie Region wishes Jake well in his new assignment.



The Laramie Region Habitat and Access crew completed five miles of fence conversion on Red Rim Grizzly Wildlife Habitat Management Area. This conversion will take the fence from six strands of wire to four strands of wildlife friendly wire. Wildlife friendly fences prevent injury and death of wild animals. Photo by Jerry Cowles.

## Fish stocked by helicopter in Snowy Range lakes

The Game and Fish Department recently used a helicopter to stock several Snowy Range alpine lakes with trout.

A helicopter has been the preferred choice for stocking fish in alpine lakes since the early 1970s. It is easier to access and negotiate the high alpine lakes with this method, is less stressful for the fish and requires less space to land at the staging area which all ultimately increases the goal of high survival rates of the fish stocked in these waters.

Helicopter stocking is done in the early morning hours to take advantage of upward air currents, reduced wind activity and to avoid afternoon thunderstorms. Stocking by helicopter doesn't hurt the fish. They are dropped 50-100 feet from the water and are released with a large amount of water from the tank, which absorbs the impact.

Helicopter stocking is normally conducted in even numbered years in the Snowy Range. Small fingerlings are stocked to allow the helicopter to handle the largest possible number of fish. The following lakes were stocked in the Medicine Bow National Forest: Albany South Twin Lake: 1,500 Bear River Cutthroat Trout; South Gap Lake: 2,500 Bear River Cutthroat Trout; East Glacier Lake: 800 Bear River Cutthroat Trout; South Gap Lake: 2,500 Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout; Golden Lake: 500 Golden Trout; Shelf Lake #1: 300 Golden Trout; Shelf Lake #2: 700 Golden Trout; Bear Lake: 2,000 Golden Trout.



In the photo above, the helicopter takes flight carrying thousands of young fingerling fish to be stocked in alpine lakes in the Snowy Range. At left, the container used to carry the fish contains eight separate compartments, giving fish managers eight options for stocking in various lakes. The tanks are opened remotely when the helicopter arrives in the right location above a lake. Photos by Bobby Compton and Brandon Taro.

## Bass opportunities abound

Largemouth Bass are an aggressive sport fish coveted by anglers. That's why Game and Fish works hard to provide bass angling opportunities for Wyoming anglers, and fish managers want to share some tips on catching these fish.

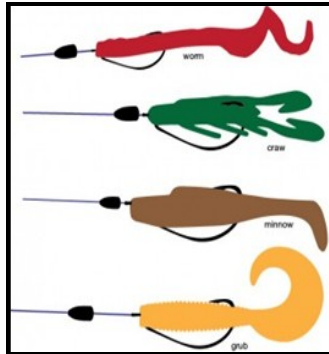
The Laramie Fish Management crew recently completed sampling for Largemouth Bass at Lake Absar-raca, Festo Lake, Packers Lake, Rock Lake, and Sloans Lake.

These fisheries offer anglers an opportunity to catch a species of fish they may not normally target. While bass will go for many of the same lures and baits used to catch trout and Walleye, some specialized tackle might help increase catch rates for an angler targeting Largemouth Bass.

Soft plastic worms, rubber skirted flipping and casting jigs, crankbaits and spinnerbaits are only a few of the many bass fishing lures available to anglers. A Texas-rigged soft plastic worm is a great option for fishing around cover (think downed trees, stumps and weedy shoreline) as the hook is less likely to become snagged on unseen branches and logs (see picture).

When air temperatures rise and fish retreat to deeper, cooler water try fishing a diving crankbait around ledges and deeper structure within the lake. With numerous lakes with Largemouth Bass in the Laramie Region anglers have a choice when it comes to their experience. Lake Absar-raca, Packers Lake, and Sloans Lake have large populations of 8- to 12-inch fish with a chance for fast action.

Festo Lake and Rock Lake hold fewer fish and catch rates may be low but the possibility exists for a true trophy sized bass (4 to 5 pounds) in Wyoming. There are a few other lakes that where Large-mouth Bass can be found, such as Bump Sullivan Reservoir, Gray-rocks Reservoir, and Hawk Springs Reservoir.



Laramie Regional Fisheries Supervisor Bobby Compton, with two Rock Lake Largemouth Bass.

There are also Smallmouth Bass in the Laramie Region and the two best spots are Grayrocks Reservoir and Wheatland Reservoir #1. Remember to check the 2016 Wyoming Fishing Regulations, as some of these waters have special bass regulations.

## Fisheries surveys completed

The Laramie Region Fishery Management Crew completed two major trout population estimates during the month of July on the Laramie River and the North Platte River.

The Laramie River trout population along the City of Laramie Greenbelt appears to be in good shape. Wild Brown Trout were numerous and biologists were pleased to learn the fish were using the habitat created during a river stabilization project a few years ago.

The North Platte River within the Fort Steele/Rochelle Public Access Area upstream of Interstate 80 was also sampled. Wild Rainbow and Brown Trout ranging from 6-21 inches were captured. The Laramie Fisheries Crew samples one of five established sections of the North Platte River above Seminole Reservoir each year.

Actual estimates will not be available until later this year when field work has ended and biologists have time to analyze all the data. In the photo at right, a Brown Trout is measured and marked on the North Platte River.



## Remember the safety laws

Sportsmen are reminded that shooting from a public road and taking wildlife from a vehicle is illegal.

Even though licenses are not required to take nongame animals such as prairie dogs, statutes and regulations for public safety still apply.

Two young hunters were recently reminded about laws that prohibit shooting from public roads and vehicles in the Encampment area.



## Weed management tour

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently teamed up with the Upper North Platte River Weed Management Area to tour weed treatment projects in the Laramie Region.

The tour included sites that have been treated for removal of invasive plants such as Russian olive and salt cedar, including a stop at the Rawhide Wildlife Habitat Management Area near Torrington.

The five counties encompassing the North Platte River in Wyoming joined forces in 2007 and formed the Upper North Platte River Weed Management Area to control Russian olive and salt cedar along the river and its tributaries. Starting at the Colorado state line, the counties within the project area include Carbon, Natrona, Converse, Platte and Goshen. The goal of the project is to protect and improve water resources, wildlife habitat, and native plants and animals by controlling invasive trees.



## Lab continues brucellosis work

The staff of the Wildlife Health Laboratory continues assembly work of blood kits for brucellosis surveillance in hunter-killed elk.

As of the end of July, over 7,000 blood kits had been assembled, labeled and made ready for mailing. The final goal is 11,000 kits by summer's end. The 2016 surveillance will be much like last year's effort and biologists will once again intensively concentrate on the Bighorn Mountains, but will also cover hunt areas surrounding the designated surveillance area border.

In addition, biologists will also be covering the northeastern corner of the state as part of the department's statewide surveillance effort.

This is an important program and we are always looking for blood samples from elk to document where this disease occurs and where it doesn't – so please keep us in mind whenever you have your hands on elk and can get us a blood sample!

At left, Kylie Sinclair stands next the storage shed packed full of the blood collection kits she spent the majority of the summer putting together.

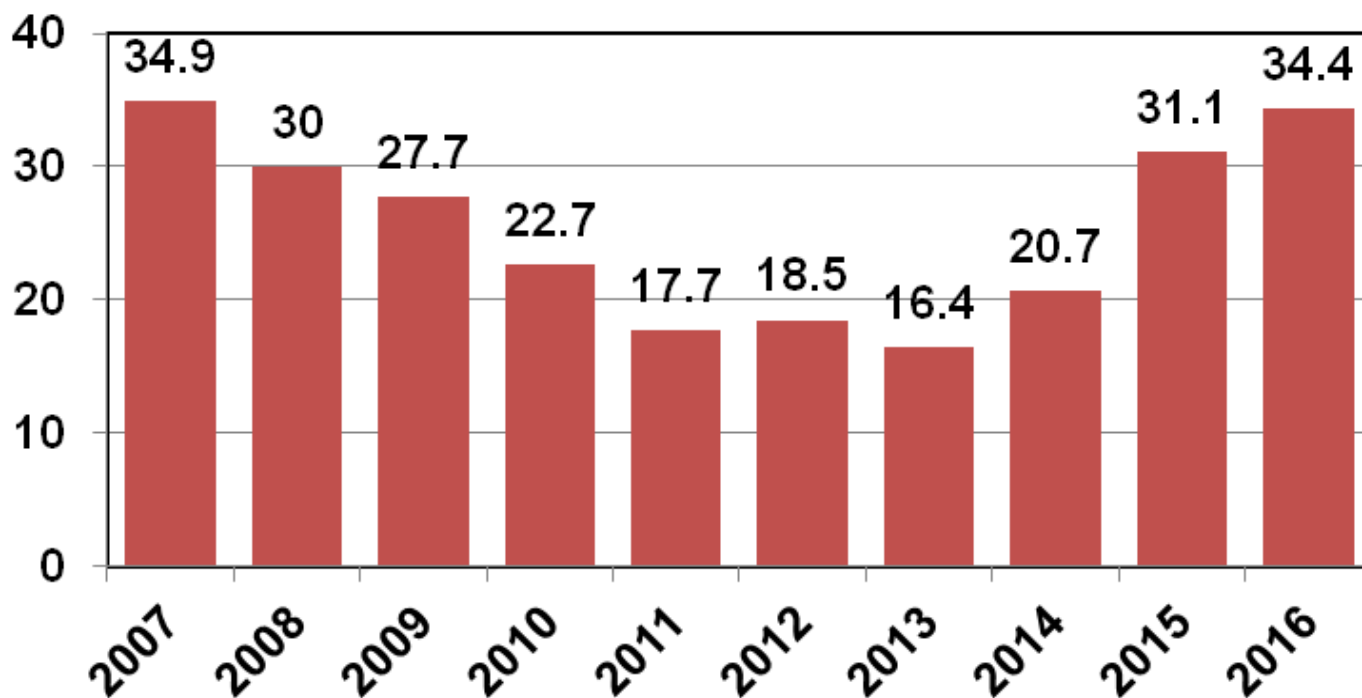


## Platte Valley fencing project

Several Game and Fish Department personnel learned how to install steel jack fence during an enclosure project on the ZN Ranch near Saratoga. Photos by Brandon Taro and Jerry Cowles.



## Average Males/Active Lek



Saratoga Wildlife Biologist Will Schultz completed data entry for the 2016 sage-grouse lek monitoring season for the Laramie Region. Schultz said this year saw yet another increase in male lek attendance.



## A lesson on owls

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton rescues a juvenile great horned owl from the shore of Saratoga Lake. Young residents get a close look at the owl that hatched in their back yard. Unfortunately, many young-of-the-year animals suffer injuries and accidents as they are learning to become self-sufficient.



## Injured saw whet owl

Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak rescued an injured Northern saw-whet owl in July. He took the owl to Cheyenne Pet Clinic for rehabilitation. Saw-whets are highly nocturnal and seldom seen by humans. However, their shrill calls can often be heard throughout evergreen forests. This particular owl apparently liked Blajszczak's coffee.

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